DOCUMENT RESUME

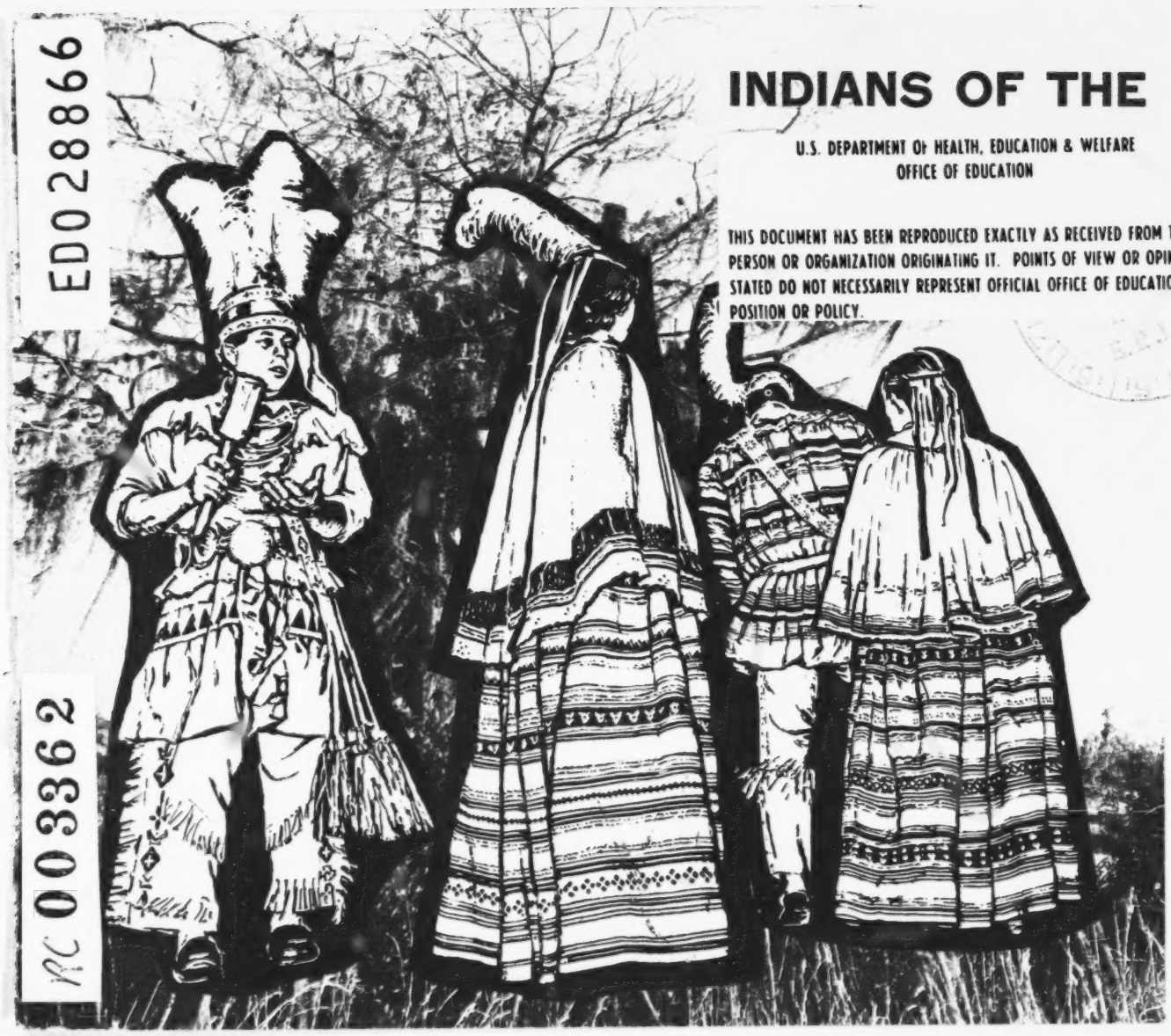
ED 028 866 RC 003 362

Indians of the Gulf Coast States.
Bureau of Indian Affairs (Dept. of Interior), Washington, D.C.
Pub Date 68
Note-24p.
Available from-Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402 (0-311-544, $0.20).
EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC Not Available from EDRS.
Descriptors-*American History, *American Indians, Cultural Interrelationships, *Culture Conflict, Culture Contact, Demography, *Ethnic Groups, *Minority Groups, Social Distribution, Southern States
Identifiers-Alabamas, Chitimachas, Choctaws, Coushattas, Creeks, Houmas, Miccosukees, Seminoles, Tunicas

A history of Indian tribes living in the Gulf Coast area of the United States entails a chronicle of adjustment, compromise, and final submission to the white man. Due primarily to conquest and subsequent resettlement of large segments of the Indian population to the western part of the United States, descendants of Indians remaining in the southeastern United States are now comprised of: an isolated group of approximately 3,800 Choctaws in Mississippi; about 2,970 Chitimachas; Coushattas; Houmas, Choctaws, and Tunicas in Louisiana; a Creek community of 545 members in Alabama; more than 1,000 Seminoles who still reside, with the related Miccosukees, in south Florida; and 360 members of the Alabama and Coushatta tribes who now live on a State-supervised reservation in Polk County, Texas. (EV)

ED028866

RC 003362



INDIANS OF THE Gulf Coast STATES

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

Introduction . . .

The early history of the Gulf Coast and the Florida Peninsula is a record of the conflicting ambitions of three great European powers—Spain, England, and France. From the Indian viewpoint, it was a chronicle of adjustment, compromise, and final submission to the pressures brought to bear upon them by the conquerors. Perhaps nowhere in the United States was there a more thorough invasion of the New World by the Old than in the southeastern States.

One author has called the original American Indian residents of this area "Kings of the South," in praise of the high degree of development they had attained. Today, the only traces left by many of these tribes are a few geographic place names. The people themselves have vanished, absorbed into other Indian groups, or, as in the case of the Five Civilized Tribes, removed to that part of Oklahoma once known as Indian Territory.

Most of the land the Indians once sought to hold, first by diplomacy and then by war, was lost to them in the 19th century. This booklet sketches the history of those who were determined to remain on their lands and who did so. It also tells something of the life of their present-day descendants against the backdrop of modern America.

204

Early Indians of
FLORIDA, ALABAMA, MISSISSIPPI, LOUISIANA, and TEXAS

The first recorded contact of white men with Indians in the area occurred in 1513 when Ponce de Leon, on his first voyage to Florida, encountered the Calusas of south Florida. At the time the Peninsula was populated by two major people, the Calusas and their northern neighbors, the Timucuas.

The Calusas fought so fiercely to drive off the Spanish interlopers that some historians believe they had experienced even earlier contacts with slave raiders. By the 18th century the Calusas and Timucuas had nearly ceased to exist, their numbers steadily decreased by battles and the introduction of European diseases.

The major language family of the southeast was Muskhogean, including the speech of the Choctaws, Chickasaws, and Creeks. In a small area in what is today southern

Sixteenth century Florida royalty. The wife of a Timucua chief is carried on a palanquin, followed by armed warriors and attendant maidens. (PHOTO: AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.)

Mississippi and Alabama were some Siouan speaking people. On the lower Mississippi River, the Attacapas, Chitimachas, Tunicas, and Natchez were independent language families, while the Yuchis of the upper Savannah River area spoke yet another language, related but unintelligible to the Creeks and Muskhogeans.

As trade with the Indians flourished, first under the Spanish and later under other European influences, a *lingua franca* emerged in the Gulf Coast area, that was composed of words from various Indian languages and was used by traders and Indians.

The journals of early travelers in the Southeast contain detailed descriptions of the people encountered there. Although not nomadic, the Indians were tireless visitors, constantly coming and going along well worn tracks through the forests and fields as they called upon friends and relatives in distant communities. Each tribe occupied its own territory, and farming was conducted on a large scale. Towns seen by early explorers consisted of houses grouped around a public square and a Council House at the heart of each community. When a town was abandoned, the site was called a *tallahassee* in the Creek language. This term, sometimes shortened to talassie or tulsa, still appears on modern maps.

Houses were constructed of wood, bark, thatch, and reeds. In the far South, walls were omitted in favor of a roof supported on poles. In warm weather clothing was kept to a minimum, although robes of skin, feathers, or woven fibres were worn in cooler seasons. Long hair was the fashion for women. Men, with the exception of the Choctaws, wore short hair, often plucked into patterns. Tattooing was practiced. Before lacrosse games, and battles, a scratching ceremony was common in which deep scratches were made on the skin. This was also done to indicate the status of a youth as an apprentice warrior, ready for his first battle.

War was a way of life, and many tribes called it the "beloved occupation." In the excitement of raids against neighboring tribes the warrior found an outlet for energy, a purpose for living, and a means of attaining honor and community status.

Central government was not developed to any great degree among most southeastern tribes at the earliest period of white contact. Common language, customs, or religion drew people into communities ruled by a head chief who was powerful and respected. His rule was not always based on heredity, but resulted from demonstrated ability and wisdom. He was not necessarily a battlefield general; other subchiefs might lead the warriors against the enemy. The tribal organization was fundamentally democratic and some writers trace the concept of "government through the consent of the

A 16th century artist's sketch of a Florida Indian shows the profusion of tattoos with which warriors often decorated their bodies. (PHOTO: AMERICAN MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY.)

governed" back to the first observations of Indian groups by Europeans.

Among the Creeks, a division of communities into "Red" and "White" towns was recognized; the "Red" communities were associated with aggression and their leaders were warriors or war chiefs, while the "White" towns were places of refuge, associated with peaceful pursuits and led by wise and unwarlike chiefs.

A clan system was prevalent among the tribes, with descent traced through the mother's family. When a man married, he went to live among his wife's people.

Religion was an important influence in southeastern Indian life and the Green Corn ceremony, held when the first roasting ears were ready for eating, was an annual renewal celebration marked by ritual fasting, and purification of body and soul.

Important in the purification of an individual for the ceremony was consumption of the "black drink," an emetic produced by boiling the leaves of certain wild plants in water. The Green Corn ceremony, with the scratching of youths and the ritual drink, survives today among the Seminoles of Florida, an offshoot of the Creek Tribe, whose amazing history will be described.

This was the civilization that the Spanish found as they moved into the new land. The Choctaws were perhaps the

most numerous of area tribes, dwelling in central and eastern Mississippi and in what is now part of eastern Alabama. The Chickasaws were their neighbors to the north, occupying land that now comprises northeastern Mississippi, northwestern Alabama, and western Tennessee. The powerful Creeks occupied the greater part of Alabama and Georgia.

Interspersed among these leading tribes were numerous smaller groups, such as the Chittimachas, relatively few in number, who lived in Louisiana. Many have long ceased to exist, like the Natchez who virtually vanished in 1729 after one battle too many with the French.

The Pattern of Conquest

White exploration and settlement began at a deceptively slow pace. It took Spain about 75 years to establish a foothold in the Florida peninsula. It was not until 1690–1700 that Spanish settlement was extended west from the Atlantic seaboard. In 1696 Pensacola was established as a challenge to French control on the Gulf of Mexico. Meanwhile newly established British colonies south of Virginia were causing Spain to look to her northern Florida frontier with some apprehension.

The year 1701 found France and Spain joined as allies against Britain in the War of the Spanish Succession. In the first of many later efforts to choose the right side, the southeastern Indian tribes formed alliances with one or another of the warring European nations. These alliances usually depended upon which nation had established trading arrangements with a particular tribe. Indian warriors served as reinforcements for the troops of the "friendly" trader.

Then, as in later years, rival nations stirred up strife among the tribes and sought to use them as buffers to protect areas of European-held territory.

The English, on the Atlantic coast, were able to establish an alliance with the Creeks and relatively good relations with the Chickasaws. The French cultivated their contacts with the Choctaws. But the Spanish were never able to establish firm alliances with their nearest Indian neighbors, the Seminoles.

Hostilities were suspended by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle in 1748, only to commence once more between Great Britain and France with the outbreak of the French and Indian War. This conflict, known to European school children as the Seven Years War, saw the power of France broken in the New World. Great Britain's victory even included the assumption of control of Florida from Spain, France's ally.

With France broken and Spain a lurking shadow in the Caribbean, Great Britain's continued presence must have

seemed assured. But the bewildered Indians soon found themselves pawns in yet another power struggle as the American settlers began their revolution against England.

In all their dealings with the white men, the southeastern tribes failed to present a united front. As the Revolution ended and the colonists began to tame their newly won country, they were able to engage one tribe at a time.

The Creek confederacy of 1716, a group of some 50 towns in Georgia and Alabama whose residents spoke six distinct languages, was perhaps the boldest attempt at consolidation of forces in the southeast. The Creeks, having traded with England, sided with her when the colonies revolted. In 1813–14 they rebelled against the new government and were roundly defeated. Eventually, between 1836 and 1840 they were removed to the West and left their beloved lands forever in the hands of the white man.

One group of the Creeks, the Seminoles, were more determined to resist white encroachment; sheer persistence enabled them to hold much of their territory against all odds. Of the Indians who greeted the early explorers in the southeastern United States these remain today: an isolated group of Choctaws in Mississippi; a handful of Chittimachas, Coushattas, Houmas, Choctaws, and Tunicas in Louisiana; a Creek community in Alabama; and the Seminoles who still reside, with the related Miccosukees, in south Florida.

The Seminoles—A People Who Would Not Yield

The name of this tribe, first used in the last quarter of the 18th century, is derived from the Creek words Isti Simanole which have been variously translated as "separatist," "broken off," or "runaway" peoples. Modern Creek-speaking Indians translate the expression as "wild people," implying that the proud Seminoles insisted on their freedom as do the untamed wild birds and animals of their native Everglades.

In their early history the Seminoles were closely associated with the Creeks. Originally composed of immigrants from the lower Creek towns along the Chattahoochee River, the early Seminoles moved into Florida to escape the fate of other tribes in the troubled border area. The Apalachees, once a principal tribe of perhaps 8,000 people living in the area of present day Tallahassee, had been virtually erased by British expeditions in the early 1700's. This was only one of many similar episodes of bitter fighting on the Florida border as Spanish and British interests clashed.

When the American Revolution began, the Seminoles were a mixed people. There were strong evidences of Muskhogean stock, for example Creeks, Apalachicolas, and Apalachees. There were remnants of the earlier Timucuas, descendants of the east coast Mayucas and Ays and a number of Tegestas from the southern peninsula. There were

Indians who spoke the Hitchiti language, a Muskhogean tongue that differs from Creek. Among these were the Miccosukees, who lived near Lake Miccosukee in what is now Leon County.

The Treaty of Paris ended the Revolutionary War, recognized the independence of the United States and returned Florida, after 20 years of British rule, to Spain. The international boundary at Florida's northern frontier thus separated Indians who were blood relatives. North of the line the Creek Confederacy grew, by 1789 to about 100 towns, with an army of 6,000 warriors. South of the line the Florida Indians controlled most of the peninsula, with isolated Spanish posts maintained at St. Marks, St. Augustine, and Pensacola.

The Florida towns were self-sufficient communities laid out according to the earlier Creek plan, with houses grouped around a square and community building. One typical village, Cuscowilla, contained about 30 dwellings of a type peculiar to the southeastern area. Each home consisted of two structures: a two-story building for storage, containing quarters for the head of the family and a one-story facility for cooking and sleeping. Family gardens were located nearby and a common plantation was worked by all tribal members. Each family contributed to a public food supply which served visitors and indigent tribal members.

Nineteenth century artist's sketch of a Seminole dwelling. The "chickee" was clearly adapted to tropical living. (PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.)

The industrious villagers hunted, fished, grew crops on their slash farms, and raised livestock. Adept traders, they bartered skins, furs, dried fish, beeswax, honey, and bear's oil for Spanish coffee, sugar, liquors, and tobacco. An ingenious dugout, carved from the trunk of a cypress tree,

carried more adventurous Seminoles as far as Cuba and the Bahamas.

During the 1700's the Seminoles had attained a high degree of prosperity, as compared to other North American tribes. They then occupied the richest lands in Florida, from which they were later pushed by white men. Their economy never recovered from this blow.

Fearless warriors, the Seminoles were respected adversaries in their battles with the Choctaws of western Florida and with other intruders. They rarely surrendered in battle, a fact which was later amply proved in their encounters with the United States forces during the Seminole Wars.

Although the Seminoles seemed to feel no need for a strong, central government, they adhered to long established customs and recognized a uniform code of social controls and religious beliefs. The pattern of conduct that sustained them through long periods of war and oppression is still evident today.

Unrest on the Frontier

Throughout the Southeast, the Indians complicated diplomatic relations between the burgeoning United States and the waning power of Spain. Frontier intrigue was the order of the day, as Spain tried to advance her influence on the Mississippi and American settlers pushed westward.

Prominent in the maneuvering on the Florida frontier were two soldiers of fortune, Alexander McGillivray and Augustus Bowles. McGillivray, son of a Scotch trader and a French-Creek woman, was a citizen of the Creek Confederacy. An educated, shrewd, and diplomatic employee of the Spanish chartered trading company, Panton, Leslie and Company, McGillivray long dominated the profitable Creek trade.

His opponent in the struggle for profits was a Maryland adventurer named Augustus Bowles, who married into the Creek tribe. Bowles sought to break the Spanish monopoly of Panton, Leslie and Company and was to be blamed for much of the Indian unrest on the Florida frontier.

Yet another problem was building out of slavery, a long established institution in the New World. Fugitive slaves from plantations in Georgia, the Carolinas, and other northern areas streamed into Florida, where they were given refuge by the Indians.

The Seminoles' position with regard to slavery was to involve them in disastrous conflict with the United States. Although many Indians owned Negro slaves, they were milder masters than the white plantation owners. The slave occupied a position more akin to that of a tenant-farmer. Frequently, they lived apart in small communities, paying a tribute of agricultural products to the Indian owner and enjoying much freedom. Some slaves married into the tribe,

gaining complete freedom and even a higher degree of influence in the Seminole communities and counsels of war.

When the United States turned full attention to matters on the Florida frontier, the course of Indian history was sharply changed. In 1796 the Creek Confederacy signed the Treaty of Colerain with the United States, agreeing to return fugitive slaves to their owners. The Seminoles and Lower Creeks were not represented at the parley and did not feel themselves bound by the agreement. This was one of the factors that brought about the separation of the Seminoles from the main body of the Creeks and their establishment as a separate tribe. The break finally became complete in the first decades of the 19th century.

The Government was beginning to obtain by treaty large chunks of Indian land for white settlement, often taking cessions in exchange for settlement of outstanding debts of tribal members. Some of the treaties provided annuities to the tribes for established periods of years, in addition to the settlement of debts. The lands thus acquired from the Indians rapidly filled with white settlers. In the early months of 1812 immigrants were flowing toward the west along a new road between the Chattahoochee River and Mims' Ferry on the Alabama River. The Creeks and Seminoles were directly in the path of this advance and the United States was looking hungrily at the Florida Peninsula, still in the hands of Spain.

The Creek War

During the War of 1812 many southeastern Indians allied with the British, perhaps hoping to turn the clock back to pre-Revolutionary times. Violence between Indians and whites on the Florida border occurred and the Creeks split into two factions, the pro-British Red Sticks and the followers of William McIntosh, a Coweta chief who allied with the United States.

In the spring of 1814 at Horseshoe Bend on the Tallapoosa River, Gen. Andrew Jackson rode upon the scene and vanquished the Red Sticks. Later that year, Jackson negotiated a treaty with the Creeks that acquired nearly 8 million acres of Creek land for the United States.

A number of Upper Creeks, in disagreement with the terms of the Treaty, fled to join the Seminoles in Florida. Accompanying them was the youthful Osceola who one day would challenge Jackson again.

The Seminole Wars

In 1817 the First Seminole War broke out and Jackson was authorized to enter Spanish territory to subdue the rebellious Seminoles. His capture of Fort St. Marks and Pensacola, while pursuing the Indians, so reduced Spain's strength that she signed a treaty on February 22, 1819, ceding Florida to the

United States for about $5 million. A new boundary was established with Spain on the Sabine River.

When Jackson withdrew his army from Florida in 1818 he had negotiated no treaty with the Seminoles. The United States persisted in considering them a part of the Creek Confederacy.

Jackson served briefly as military governor of Florida Territory to be succeeded by William P. Duval who, in 1823, negotiated the Treaty of Camp Moultrie with some of the Seminoles. The Indian signers, later claimed by the tribe to represent only a small faction of their numbers, ceded most of their lands—about 32 million acres—and accepted a 4-million-acre Seminole reservation in central Florida. The boundaries were placed about 15 miles from the Gulf Coast and about 20 miles from the Atlantic. United States citizens were to be allowed right of unhindered passage through this Indian land, and the Seminoles were to be guaranteed against encroachment, if they conformed to United States laws. Farming implements, livestock, food rations, funds to support a school and a 20-year annuity of $5,000 were among the provisions of the Treaty of Camp Moultrie.

Son of a Scotch trader and an Indian woman, William McIntosh rose to prominence as a Chief of the Lower Creeks and a United States ally in the War of 1812. He was executed by Creek warriors in 1825 for ceding lands to the United States without tribal consent. (PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.)

311-554 O - 68 - 2

A site for the Territorial Capital was selected on the lands of Chefixico Hadjo, a Seminole subchief, over his objections. Congress confirmed the choice. Governor Duval, faced with a subsequent uprising planned by the principal chief Neamathla, expelled him to Georgia and named John Hicks to succeed him.

During 1824 the Indians were resettled on the new reservation; by the winter of 1825 the sudden change in their way of life was having unfortunate effects. Many had arrived too late to plant crops and were compensating for insufficient food supplies by raids on nearby white settlements. Much of the land was poor, wet, and unsuited for agriculture. In many parts of the reservation there was no source of potable water.

As the Seminoles struggled to adjust to their restricted area, white settlers continued to pour into the peninsula. For these newcomers, it seemed that passage of the 1830 Removal Act in Congress would provide the machinery for shuttling the Indians westward and opening all of the Southeast to white men. Col. James Gadsden of Tallahassee was appointed by the Secretary of War to discuss plans for such a move with the Seminoles. It was to be his mission to persuade the "Isti Simanole" that they were still a part of the Creek Tribe and should reunite with the Creeks already removed to Oklahoma.

On May 9, 1832, another treaty was signed by a few Seminole chiefs at Payne's Landing on the Oclawaha River. Between 1833 and 1835, according to the terms, the Indians were to move west of the Mississippi into the land of the transplanted Creeks. They were to receive $15,400 for real improvements to their Florida lands; a $3,000 annuity for 15 years, in addition to that provided in the Camp Moultrie Treaty; and the liquidation of Indian debts up to a limit of $7,000. A separate but similar treaty was negotiated with the Indians of the Appalachicola region at Tallahassee. After a delegation of Seminoles was persuaded to view the Creek lands and approve them, the United States considered the provisions of the Payne's Landing Treaty to be in effect.

When the newly appointed Indian agent, Wiley Thompson, began the actual removal operation, he encountered difficulties. Many Seminoles were determined to remain in their homeland at any cost. John Eaton, then governor, perceived the impending danger of an Indian war and attempted to warn the United States to proceed with caution.

In April 1835, the Seminoles met Wiley Thompson in a formal council at which Osceola was one of the leaders. At first they flatly refused to leave Florida and only through the threats of force by the Indian agent were a few of the chiefs persuaded to agree to removal.

As Thompson prepared to assemble the Indians near Tampa for their departure, Gov. Richard Keith Call, Eaton's successor, received permission from the War Department to permit

purchase of slaves from the Seminoles. Although this action served the interests of former owners of fugitive slaves anxious to retrieve their property, it raised questions about possible violation of United States commitments to protect Indian property during the removal.

During 1835 violence flared in Florida, with the murder of an express rider, Indian attacks on white plantations and armed clashes between whites and Seminole hunters.

On December 28, 1835, Agent Thompson was shot from ambush and Osceola was recognized as a leader of the war party. Later that same day, two companies of soldiers led by Maj. Francis L. Dade were engaged by Chiefs Jumper, Micanopy, and Alligator. Only three soldiers survived the massacre to die later of their wounds. The Second Seminole War had begun in earnest.

An impressive roster of military leaders began to appear in Florida as the bitter uprising continued. Col. Duncan Clinch and Governor Call, a Brigadier-General in the Florida Volunteers, marched to the attack with 500 men. They were cut off at a ford of the Withlacoochee by an Indian party of half that number.

Osceola, one of the great Indian leaders who united the Florida Indians during the Seminole Wars—the final effort to retain their lands and avoid removal to the West. (PHOTO: SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION.)

Gen. Edmund P. Gaines arrived from New Orleans with 1,100 soldiers in February 1836 and was trapped at the same Withlacoochee crossing on his way to Fort Brooke. Held at bay until his men were forced to slaughter horses for food, Gaines finally induced the Indians to come into his camp for a peace parley. Then occurred one of the many fateful twists of the Seminole campaign. Col. Clinch, arriving with a relief party, mistakenly opened fire on the Indian delegation and brought an abrupt end to the peace overtures.

Gen. Winfield Scott, charged with command of all the troops in the field, planned a three-pronged attack from Fort Drane in the North, Volusia on the St. Johns River to the East, and from Tampa Bay on the West. Recruits from Georgia, Alabama, and South Carolina were brought in as reinforcements. The elusive Seminoles slipped through the converging forces sent to crush them and the plan failed. Scott was later replaced, first by General Call and later by Gen. Thomas S. Jesup, with 8,000 soldiers at his disposal.

On January 27, 1837, General Jesup engaged the main body of the Seminole forces in the battle of Great Cypress and drove them into the swamps. The Seminoles requested a peace conference which was set for February 3, 1837, at Fort Dade on the Withlacoochee. But Seminole warriors were scattered and Seminole leaders in disagreement as to the wisdom of peace talks and the Indians failed to keep the appointment.

A new date was set for March 6 and Principal Chief Micanopy authorized two Seminole representatives to act in his behalf. Onselmatche and Yaholoochee signed a document committing the Seminoles to withdraw south of the Hillsborough River and to be prepared for removal West in April. They were told that their Negroes would go with them. Even Osceola indicated that this arrangement might be satisfactory, Jesup reported to his superiors in Washington.

Removal to the West

Exactly on schedule the removal began, following the pattern of previous Indian removals, replete with hardships. There were deaths along the trail, inclement weather, poor or insufficient transportation, and inadequate supplies. The first group to be transported consisted principally of Upper Creeks. Gathering the other Indians was complicated by the continuing efforts of white slave owners to recover fugitive Negroes from the Indians.

As the initial stages of the removal proceeded, Jesup mounted his second campaign against those Seminoles who still resisted. On October 17, 1837, Osceola, meeting with Jesup under a flag of truce, was suddenly seized and carried off to prison. He never knew freedom again and died of malaria at Fort Moultrie 3 months later.

On Christmas morning, 1837, the Seminoles and Miccosukees joined forces for one last desperate attempt to turn back the United States troops. In a fierce battle near Lake Okeechobee the Indians were driven off by soldiers led by Zachary Taylor. They left many casualties on the United States side before they fled into the sanctuary of the Everglades.

This was the last major encounter of the Second Seminole War, although the bloody fighting continued sporadically. On August 14, 1842, the war was declared ended. It had taken the lives of nearly 1,500 field troops, probably as many Indians, and had cost the United States about $20 million.

At last, in 1845, an agreement was reached by the Seminoles, the Creeks, and the United States, providing for a final resettlement of the Florida tribe on Creek land in the Oklahoma Indian Territory.

In 1849, a band of some 360 Seminoles remaining in Florida were goaded into an uprising that has been given the exaggerated title of the Third Seminole War. Aging Chief Billy Bowlegs was the leader of about 120 warriors engaged in the rebellion. After a series of minor skirmishes, the Indians were subdued and repatriation to the West went on as usual. Ten years later the majority of Seminoles had been removed and only a determined few who had fled deep into the Everglades remained in Florida. By 1908 the population numbered about 275.

INDIANS OF THE GULF IN MODERN TIMES

Seminoles

Today, in Florida there are more than 1,000 Indians living on trust lands under the jurisdiction of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, in Everglades National Park under special agreement, and elsewhere on nontrust lands on the Tamiami Trail. The majority reside on or near four reservations: Big Cypress (42,728 acres) in Hendry County, northwest of Lake Okeechobee; Brighton (35,805 acres) in Glades County, south-central Florida; and tiny Hollywood (480 acres) in Broward County, north of Miami; and a new Miccosukee reservation (333 acres) on the Tamiami Trail.

Most Miccosukees live in Everglades National Park. A fifth reservation, under the jurisdiction of the State of Florida, and comprising more than 107,000 acres, adjoins Big Cypress. Although all American Indians have been citizens of the United States by an Act of Congress passed in 1924, these two Indian tribes long preferred to live as recluses in their native hammocks. In this self-decreed isolation, most could not read or write and understood little or no English. They lived by hunting and fishing and occasional employment as day laborers on truck farms, ranches, lumber mills, or highway construction projects.

Family life in the traditional "chickee" house went on much as it had in preremoval days. Seminole women, garbed in their multicolored flowing dresses, were not permitted to talk to strangers and there were few visitors to the secluded Everglades communities.

This way of life is rapidly changing as the Indians, with the assistance of the Bureau of Indian Affairs, strive to improve their opportunities for self-sufficiency.

In 1957, the Seminoles of Brighton, Big Cypress, and Hollywood organized under a constitution and elected a 5-member Tribal Council as their governing body.

Most of the Miccosukees of the Tamiami Trail formally organized under a Tribal Constitution in January 1962.

Since 1959, the Bureau has lent $1,667,000 to the two Indian organizations for projects to increase tribal and individual income and provide more employment opportunities. The Indians themselves have invested an additional $1,234,896 in tribal enterprises and loans to their members for similar purposes.

Tommie Jumper, Seminole Indian craftsman, constructs a coiled sweetgrass basket in the shade of her chickee home on the Hollywood Reservation in Florida. Her dress is typical of the Seminole women's costume now worn only by the older women of the Tribe. The skirt displays the patchwork designs for which the Seminoles are most well known. The filmy overcape, circles of colorful bead necklaces and distinctive hair style complete the dress. (PHOTO: INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS BOARD.)

During the past 5 years a million dollar land development program, financed jointly by the Indian Bureau and by tribes and outside lessees has developed 13,130 acres. Currently 16,056 net acres have been developed for the production of farm produce, grass, and citrus fruits.

The Tribe owns more than 27,500 acres of forest land from which it sells bald cypress and slash pine on the Big Cypress Reservation and cabbage palm on the Brighton Reservation providing an estimated annual income of about $5,000.

As in many other States, the great majority of Indian children attend public schools. On Big Cypress, the Bureau of Indian Affairs operates a day school for children who are too young to commute to the nearest public school. A second Bureau school was opened on the Miccosukee Reservation in 1963 for children who had not previously been in school. During the 1967 school year it served 47 children 6–19.

Adult education, conducted for Seminoles on Big Cypress and Brighton Reservations, has brought many older Indians into classrooms for the first time.

The Seminole Business Council has set aside 66 acres of tribal land for development as an industrial park. Plans also call for construction of a 40-unit motel complex, with restaurant, swimming pool, and golf course, at Hollywood.

The Amphenol Corporation's connector division established a branch plant on the Hollywood Reservation and

The Seminole Indian Arts and Crafts Center offers native handwork for sale. A nearby model village affords a glimpse of the past. (PHOTO: BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.)

started production of electrical and electronic components in early 1967. Over 30 Seminole Indians are now employed and there are plans for added workers.

A popular campground at Hollywood is a thriving tribal enterprise. Visitors are also lured to Seminole country by a replica Indian village, and an arts and crafts center where the fine handwork of local Indian craftsmen is displayed and sold.

The Miccosukee organization operates a handsome new restaurant 40 miles west of Miami on U.S. 41, financed in part by a $150,000 loan from the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Nearby, a one-room portable school building has been replaced by a modern two-room structure. With the help of the Housing Assistance Administration 25 modern houses patterned after the traditional thatched roof "chickee" have been built and a multipurpose community center has been financed by the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

The health of Florida Indians is under the supervision of a division of the U.S. Public Health Service, which contracts with the State Board of Health for comprehensive medical care, including hospitalization, for Indians not covered by other health and welfare programs. Community water and waste disposal systems have been improved on the Seminole and Miccosukee Reservations. Public health services available to non-Indians are provided by local county health departments.

The Miccosukee restaurant on the Tamiami Trail, a tribal enterprise that is typical of mushrooming Indian interest in tourism facilities. (PHOTO: BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.)

The Seminole Court Claim Against the U.S.

In the 1950's the Seminoles of Florida and Oklahoma filed claims with the Indian Claims Commission, established in 1946 to provide a direct recourse of redress for Indian tribes, for additional payment from the Federal Government for lands the Indians once held. In 1964 the Commission acknowledged original Indian title to almost all the lands

that now comprise Florida, and the U.S. Court of Claims upheld this decision in 1967.

The case has now proceeded for determination of the net acres and land values involved under treaties signed by the Indians and the amount of credits or deductions due the United States.

The Mississippi Choctaws

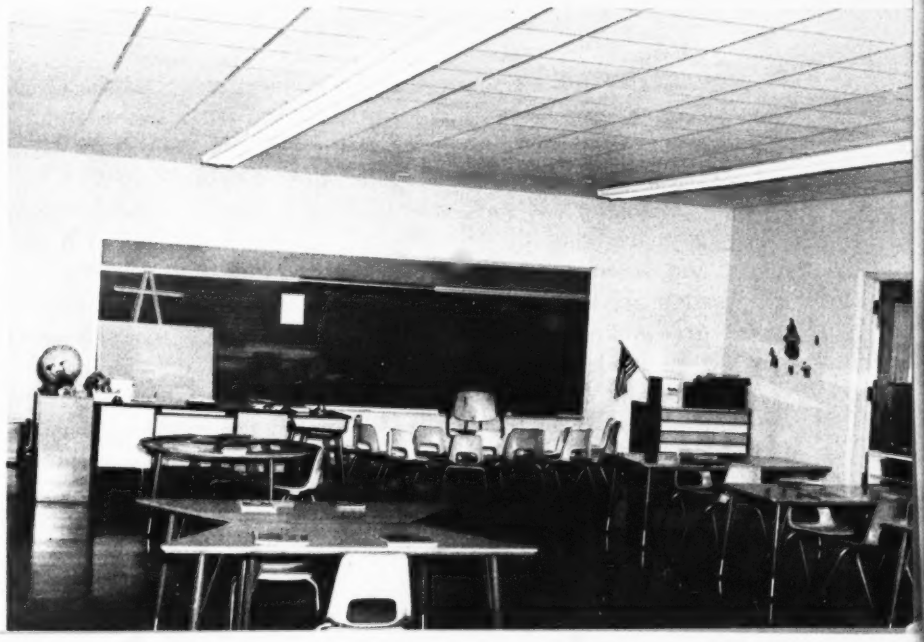
Today, near Philadelphia, Miss., live most of the eastern remnants of the Choctaws, once the most numerous tribe in the Mississippi-Alabama region. There are about 3,800 Choctaws living on or near the 17,200 acres of tribal land or on a few adjacent parcels allotted to individuals or owned by the Government.

These are the descendants of a people who were in constant contact with non-Indian culture from the early 1600's and were buffeted by every shifting wind of national policy. When the Removal Bill was passed by Congress in 1830, the Choctaws were offered a choice under the Treaty of Dancing Rabbit Creek, in September of that year. The Treaty provided for cession of about one-quarter of the present State of Mississippi to the United States, but provided that any Choctaw who wished to remain in Mississippi to become a United States citizen might do so and would receive land from the State. There were then about 20,000 Choctaws in Mississippi and more than one-third of them chose to stay. Many were to regret the choice in the dark period that followed.

Preyed upon by unscrupulous land speculators, constantly urged to go West with the bulk of the tribe, those who remained dwindled to an estimated 1,000 by World War I. Living in poverty, without hope, they were set apart by language and custom from the rest of the populace.

Today, the Choctaws are still largely isolated from non-

Classroom in a modern day school operated by the Bureau of Indian Affairs for Choctaw children in Mississippi. (PHOTO: COCHLAN, PHILADELPHIA, MISS.)



Indians. Many live on land held in trust for them by the Federal Government, others rent or sharecrop.

In 1935, the Choctaws organized under the Indian Reorganization Act. They have a Constitution and bylaws and a 16-member Tribal Council that represents the seven Choctaw communities in the State.

The Tribe owns more than 14,000 acres of forest lands and is developing them on a sustained yield basis with the help of Federal foresters. Calendar year 1967 tribal receipts from timber sales amounted to over $80,000.

Tribal members are taking advantage of the Bureau of Indian Affairs' Employment Assistance program which provides help in preparing for employment and finding jobs wherever they exist.

Giving full recognition to the cultural mores of the Choctaws of Mississippi, the Bureau contracted out a unique on-reservation training and living center in the Pearl River Community near Philadelphia, Miss. February 1967.

Husband and wife enter training to acquire a salable skill, adjustment of the whole family to life in a modern home, and, where necessary, basic elementary education. The children are taught in nursery school and those in the primary grades are tutored to allow them to catch up with their own grade level.

Seven Mississippi Choctaw couples have already received diplomas from this unusual school. Their graduation certificates signified 10 months of intensive study.

A new Bureau high school at Pearl River, opened for the 1965 school year, is part of a complex including an elementary-junior high school and two dormitories for both elementary and high school students who must come to school from distant communities.

The Public Health Service operates an Indian Hospital at Philadelphia and will authorize hospital care in other communities, specialized surgery or medical treatment at Federal expense. Through contract with the Mississippi Department of Health, public health services are furnished to Choctaws in seven counties. Safe water and waste disposal facilities have been provided by the Public Health Service for six Choctaw communities and Choctaw homes in several rural areas.

Every autumn, when the Tribal Fair is held in Philadelphia, visitors have an opportunity to gain a glimpse of Choctaw crafts, ceremonies, and games.

Alabama Indians

Some 545 Creek Indians live in southern Alabama, principally in Baldwin, Escambia, and Monroe Counties. Some also live in Escambia County, Florida, and in the vicinity of Meridian, Miss. Perhaps more than 10,000 persons can trace their ancestry to Creeks who remained east of the Mississippi River. Eastern Creeks maintained no tribal

organization and there are no Federal reservations or State supervisory agency for them in Alabama or elsewhere.

In 1962 the Indian Claims Commission granted an award of $3,913,000 to members and descendants of members of the Creek Nation as it was constituted August 9, 1814. Legislation has been introduced to authorize disposition of this award, which is shared by the Eastern Creeks and the Creeks of Oklahoma.

Creek Indians were buried according to the Creek custom of erecting small houses over the grave. (PHOTO: BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS.)

The Chitimachas of Louisiana

Only a few miles from the Gulf of Mexico, near Bayou Teche, in St. Mary's Parish, Louisiana, live the Chitimachas, a little-known Indian group of about 270 people.

Their name is of Choctaw origin and means "the people who have cooking vessels." In their own language the Chitimachas refer to themselves as "the men altogether red," a term that was probably first applied after their first contact with the white men, principally French explorers.

Indian lands under Federal trust in Louisiana total slightly more than 260 acres. Therefore, little industrial or economic development is possible. Most Chitimachas are employed in agriculture.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs operates a school at Jeanerette, La., which enrolled about 24 Chitimacha children in grades 1–6 in the 1967 school year.

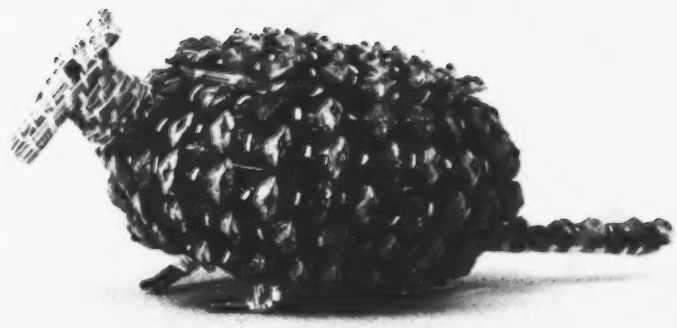
While the Chitimachas are the only Louisiana Indians for whom the Bureau exercises responsibility over 2,700 descendants of other Indian tribes also live in the State: Houmas or Sabines in Terrebonne and Lafourche Parishes; Coushattas in Allen and Jeff Davis Parishes; Tunicas in Avoyelles Parish; and Choctaws in Rapides, La Salle, and St. Tammany Parishes.

Texas Indians

The Alabama and Coushatta Tribes, a Muskhogean-speaking people who once were neighbors in Alabama and Mississippi, migrated to Texas after the advent of white explorers along the Mississippi. They were firm friends of Sam Houston, and assisted the Texas colonists in their revolt against Mexico.

Today the 360 members of these tribes live on a State supervised reservation in Polk County, about 17 miles from Livingston. Approximately 1,100 acres of their reservation lands were purchased by the State in 1854 and 1855 and deeded directly to the group, in perpetuity, under the name of the Alabama Indians. In 1928, the United States bought an adjoining 3,181 acres and took title in trust for the two groups under the name of the Alabama and Coushatta Indians. The contiguous land areas were treated as one reservation and supervised by a State-furnished superintendent. In 1954, the United States relinquished its trusteeship and the State assumed responsibility.

The State provides education, health, and welfare services for the Indians and is attempting to help the Tribal Council develop employment opportunities for tribal members. Many adult men now find jobs as laborers in the pulpwood industry, but efforts are underway to expand income from tribal timber holdings and mineral leases, and to bring new industry—including recreational development—to the reservation.



The craftsmen of the Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation in Texas use long leaf pine needles and pine cone sections to fashion a wide variety of animal effigy baskets that also serve utilitarian purposes. These and other Alabama-Coushatta crafts are sold through the Tribe's arts and crafts sales shop located in the museum and restaurant operated in conjunction with an Indian village tourist attraction on the reservation, Route 3, Box 170, Livingston, Tex. 77351. (PHOTO: ARTS AND CRAFTS BOARD, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR.)

About 160 Tiwa Indians live near El Paso, Tex. They are descended from a band of Pueblo Indians who fled to El Paso about 1682. Their village, Ysleta, was annexed by the city of El Paso several years ago. The U.S. Congress has recognized the Tiwa people as a band of American Indians and transferred to the State of Texas responsibility for them.

U.S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE: 1968 O—311-554

THINGS TO DO—PLACES TO SEE

FLORIDA

Seminole Arts and Crafts Center and Okalee Indian Village—West Hollywood, Fla., on U.S. 441—An Indian Museum; Typical Seminole Village; Arts and Crafts Sales Shop; Exhibitions of Alligator Wrestling.

Seminole Campground, one-half mile south of the Arts and Crafts Center on U.S. 441; campsites equipped with fireplaces, tables, tent sites, and central water system.

Choctaw Craft Association located on the grounds of the Choctaw Agency, Bureau of Indian Affairs, at Philadelphia, Miss. Native crafts include basketry in river cane, oak splints and honeysuckle; applique dresses, skirts, blouses; dolls; beadwork; woodcarvings; pottery.

Seminole Indian PowWow at various reservations in late August.

Miccosukee Restaurant, on the Tamiami Trail (U.S. 41) 40 miles west of Miami.

Everglades National Park, adjacent to the Miccosukee Reservation, features a 40-foot observation tower commanding an excellent view of the surrounding hammock country. Alligators may be seen at close range in the nearby canal waterway. Other area attractions include airboat and swamp buggy rides; excellent fishing; Everglades tours.

MISSISSIPPI

The Choctaw Indian Fair, held each August at Philadelphia, Miss., features displays of basketry, pottery, and other native arts and crafts; craftsmen may be seen at work; lacrosse games are played.

TEXAS

Tribal Enterprise, Alabama-Coushatta Indian Reservation on U.S. 190 between Woodville and Livingston, Tex. Native crafts include coiled pine needle basketry—containers, effigy; cane basketry; beadwork; weavings; pottery; and implements and utensils.

As the Nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities for water, fish, wildlife, mineral, land, park, and recreational resources. Indian and Territorial affairs are other major concerns of America's "Department of Natural Resources."

The Department works to assure the wisest choice in managing all our resources so each will make its full contribution to a better United States—now and in the future.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR • BUREAU OF INDIAN AFFAIRS

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402 - Price 20 cents